



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAY 9 2006

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Governor
State of Arizona
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Napolitano:

This is in response to your letter of March 7, 2006, requesting a disaster designation for the entire State of Arizona due to losses caused by drought that occurred from January 1, 2006, and continuing.

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) has reviewed the Damage Assessment Report, along with additional information submitted by the State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency (FSA). Based on this review, USDA has determined that there were sufficient production losses in all Arizona counties, except La Paz County, to warrant a Secretarial natural disaster designation. Therefore, I am designating all counties in the State of Arizona, except La Paz County, as primary natural disaster areas.

In accordance with section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, La Paz County is named as a contiguous disaster county.

We were unable to confirm that sufficient production losses occurred in La Paz County. There were no qualifying losses in La Paz County due to the natural disaster. Therefore, I am unable to approve your request for the designation of La Paz County as a primary natural disaster area.

However, La Paz County will be eligible for FSA emergency loan assistance, as a contiguous county for this disaster, as indicated above.

This designation makes farm operators in both primary and contiguous counties eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from FSA, provided eligibility requirements are met. FSA will consider each application on its own merit by taking into account the extent of losses, security available, and repayment ability.

Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with further information.

Sincerely,

Mike Johanns
Secretary